

CIA 5.03.1

ORG/NATIONAL Conference
of Editorial Writers

CIA 3.01.3 Journalists

DES MOINES, IOWA
REGISTER

M - 243,471
S - 481,727

AUG 23 1976

Runaround by the CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has a simple strategy for dealing with its critics: ignore them. The National Conference of Editorial Writers knows how the tactic works.

The organization's executive board objected in a resolution last spring to the "clandestine employment of American or foreign journalists" by the CIA and the planting of false or misleading information by the CIA in the media. The resolution called on the agency to disclose the names of journalists who are or have been in its employ. The resolution was sent in May to CIA Director George Bush with a request for a meeting.

Bush responded that he would be glad to arrange a meeting "with someone in the CIA who could discuss this matter in greater detail," but he did not comment on the concerns expressed by the editorial writers except to refer the group to a statement issued by Bush the previous February.

The organization's answer to Bush described the February statement as inadequate and again expressed the organization's concerns and again asked for a meeting. The

response, from a Bush assistant, came after a delay of nearly two months. The letter described and defended the CIA's policy of not disclosing names but it ignored the other issues raised by the organization and ignored the request for a meeting.

CIA representatives recently told another group that the agency would not have dealings with anyone working in a journalistic capacity for U.S. news agencies, but it has not put this in writing. The agency has refused to drop foreign journalists from its payroll and has refused to stop using covert propaganda abroad. There is no way to prevent phony stories planted abroad from being picked up by the U.S. news media.

The CIA's refusal to discuss this and related issues with a responsible organization is disturbing. The agency's involvement in cloak-and-dagger work does not relieve it from being accountable to the public. The double talk and evasion the CIA has engaged in on this issue make us wonder about the true dimensions of the agency's efforts to manipulate the media.